

2. Spelling

2.1. The alphabet¹

a – <i>a</i>	g – <i>gee</i>	m – <i>em</i>	s – <i>es</i>	y – <i>y</i>
b – <i>bee</i>	h – <i>ha</i>	n – <i>en</i>	t – <i>tee</i>	z – <i>zet</i>
c – <i>see</i>	i – <i>ie</i>	o – <i>o</i>	u – <i>u</i>	
d – <i>dee</i>	j – <i>jee</i>	p – <i>pee</i>	v – <i>fee</i>	
e – <i>ee</i>	k – <i>ka</i>	q – <i>ku</i>	w – <i>wee</i>	
f – <i>ef</i>	l – <i>el</i>	r – <i>er</i>	x – <i>eks</i>	

The above names of the letters should be pronounced as if they are Afrikaans words, noting the following:

bee, *see*, *ee*, etc. are pronounced with a broken vowel, i.e. [eə]

a is pronounced [a:]

o is pronounced [oə]

u is pronounced [y]

y is pronounced [əi]

The following letters are rarely used in Afrikaans orthography:

C outside the combination *ch* is very rare, e.g. *akademici* ‘academics’, *Africana*, *Macedonië*. The [k] sound in indigenous words is spelt *k*, and loanwords with *c* in the original language are spelt either *k* or *s* depending on the sound for which the *c* stands in the original language, e.g. *klub* ‘club’, *sent* ‘cent’.

Q is virtually non-existent in Afrikaans, loanwords with *qu* being spelt *kw*, e.g. *kwaliteit* ‘quality’.

X is as rare as *q*, occurring in only very few obscure loanwords. Non-Greek loanwords with an *x* in the language of origin, are spelt *ks*, e.g. *ekskuus* ‘excuse’. Exception *Xhosa*, pronounced [kllɔsa], where [ll] represents a click.

Y represents the diphthong [əi] and is not used to represent the consonant or semi-vowel [j]. Loanwords in which the vowel was written *y* in the language of origin are spelt with an *i* in Afrikaans, e.g. *tipe* ‘type’. The sound in English *year* is represented by *j* in Afrikaans, e.g. *jaar* ‘year’.

Z is almost as scarce as *q* and *x* in Afrikaans. Loanwords with *z* in the language of origin are usually spelt *s* in Afrikaans, which includes the many Dutch words with *z*, e.g. *osoon* ‘ozone’, *sink* ‘zinc’, *ses* ‘six’ (< Dutch *zes*), *huise* ‘houses’ (< Dutch *huizen*).

¹ See 4.1.6.11 for the plural of these letters and 4.2.1.1 for their diminutive forms.

adapted from:

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